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ABSTRACT

If students are to be responsible in significant ways for their own learning, teachers must develop the ability to move from directive teaching behaviors to supportive ones. This paper examines a teacher-behavior model, presented in a book by Muska Mosston, that includes a spectrum of seven teaching styles, ranging from total teacher direction through total student direction. It then reports on a pilot study that attempted to program a teacher through these variations in teaching style by improvising on Mosston's model, and it comments on findings that indicate which steps are crucial in the transition from teacher direction to student direction. The paper shows how a teacher may structure a series of lessons based on the American folklore collections of Alvin Schwartz in such a way that students may move toward independence in learning. Guidelines for structuring the lessons are provided, along with lists of folklore resources that may be used. (GW)

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TOWARD SELF-DIRECTION WITH AMERICAN FOLKLORE

Ruth M. Noyce

Learning centers and individualized reading programs are among the approaches currently popular with humanistic teachers, as they demonstrate their respect for the learner's right to be a decision-maker. The offering of activity options and opportunities for divergent thinking shows regard for the dignity and freedom of the learner. The amount of decision-making power actually afforded the student through these approaches is minimal, however, because students are not often involved in the important processes of planning goals or deciding how to implement them. Most learning centers are teacher-designed environments which provide an array of activities from which the student selects according to abilities and interests. Most individualized reading programs involve the student in self-selection of books and self-pacing of reading, but the purposes for reading are directed by the teacher. Readers may select questions to answer and extending activities to engage in from a variety of teacher-planned options without being given the decision-making power to read for their own special reasons. The decisions made by the learner in these individualized formats are not the important ones from a personal standpoint. Self-realization through a commitment to reading is more likely to occur as students read to answer their own questions, solve their own problems, or pursue their own creative goals.

The fact that implementation of the concept of self-direction is not widespread in our nation's classrooms does not necessarily indicate that it is an unacceptable theory among educators. There are , in practice, awesome implications for teachers which may account for the paucity of opportunities for student self-direction. If

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students are to be responsible in significant ways for their own learning, new patterns of individualization are needed. A major challenge facing teachers who would foster self-directed learning is the acquiring of flexibility with a variety of teaching styles. The change means developing the ability to move readily from directive to supportive teaching behaviors. This mobility is vital to the nurturing of student decision-making.

How, then, can teachers who desire to change be helped to learn new teaching behaviors? Muska Mosston presents a model to use for this purpose in his book Teaching: From Command to Discovery.[1] Mosston's procedure stems from his belief that teachers need a large repertoire of behavioral models because no single teaching behavior can accommodate a student's full development. He suggests that the multi-dimensional characteristics of humans make one-dimensional teaching behaviors inappropriate. His particular concern relates to the designing of teaching models to implement the proposals of Guilford's structure of the intellect and the suggestions of such cognitive psychologists as Torrance and Taylor for encouraging creative thinking. The Mosston plan presents the teacher with a spectrum of seven teaching styles, ranging from total teacher direction through total student direction. It is a continuum of models of teaching behavior based on the amount of decision-making power given to the students by the teacher. A command-style teacher can be guided by the model through the necessary steps in acquiring a teaching style which will accommodate self-direction in the classroom. A complete reorganization of the learning

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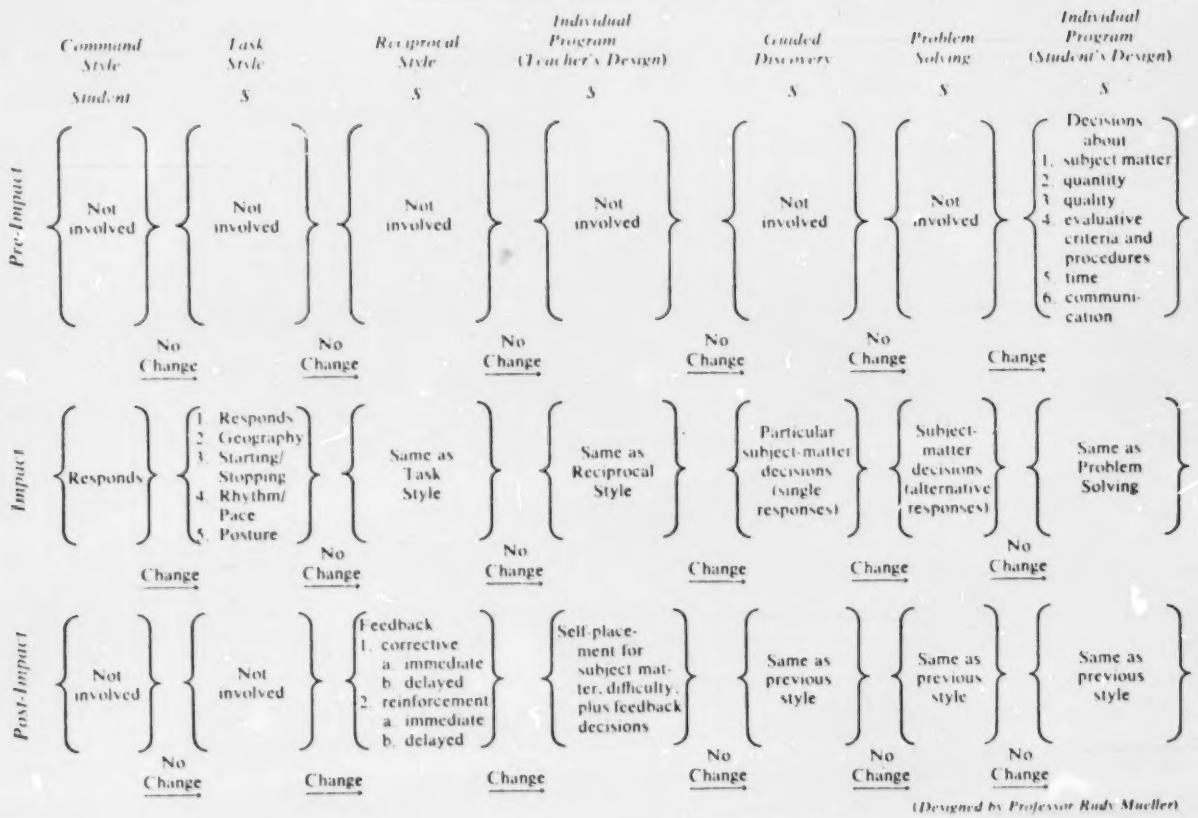
[1] Muska Mosston. Teaching: From Command to Discovery. Belmont, CA.: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1972.

environment is facilitated in gradual stages by the teacher's turning of one decision at a time over to students. [2]

Decision Shift to Student for Each Style



(Designed by Professor Rudy Mueller)

[2] Ibid., p. 173.

Mosston's operational plan for shifting decisions to students begins with command-style teaching. The teacher is making all decisions about instruction at this point: pre-impact (curricular decisions from diagnosis),impact (activities designed to meet objectives), and post-impact (evaluation). Not until the students are completely self-directed (Individual Program - Student's Design) does the teacher turn over to them the actual setting of curricular objectives, but the students' roles change with each style, moving in the direction of increased responsibility for decision-making. In Mosston's Task style, students make decisions about the carrying out of activities planned by the teacher to meet teacher-set objectives. In the Reciprocal style, students learn to understand the teacher's evaluative function by changing roles with the teacher and assuming post-impact responsibility for other students. Students begin self-evaluation in the next stage (Individual Program - Teacher's Design) as they make impact and post-impact decisions on an individual basis, while the teacher is still making the pre-impact curricular decisions. In the Guided Discovery stage, the focus is on problem-solving, with students designing activities to solve curricular problems presented by the teacher and defining criteria for evaluating. The students are almost self-directed at this point. The final stage in the process is the Individual Program - Student's Design in which students actually set their own curricular goals, design activities to meet them, and evaluate their own work. Mosston does not offer instructional procedures for each style, but his approach seems worthy of implementation.

A recent pilot study completed at The University of Kansas[3] attempted to program a teacher through the variations in teaching style by improvising on the Mosston idea. The model designed to guide the study described specific instructional procedures for facilitating the learning of skills of self-direction by sixth-grade children within the language arts curriculum. This research indicated that the Reciprocal step is a crucial stage in the transition from teacher-direction to student-direction, for independence in style of learning is first experienced in this phase. Student behaviors vital to the later steps are introduced as children adopt the role of teacher, experiencing freedom from total teacher-direction and assuming some responsibility for their own learning. The teacher reported a marked change in student behavior during the Reciprocal step of the project and explained that it seemed to be the turning point of the experiment. Students began teaching each other by using the materials and methods of the classroom teacher. As they worked at the task of teaching, however, they soon developed an independence from the teacher's style which continued through the last phase of the study with students preparing their own materials and learning independently.

The Reciprocal step presented challenging problems to those charged with providing curriculum materials for the study. While the students were given significant decision-making power for the first time, they were not yet responsible for locating their own resources. Special kinds of instructional materials were

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[3]Betty L. Barton. Toward the Development of a Self Directed Learner. Unpublished masters thesis, The University of Kansas, 1976.

needed to help children design activities to meet chosen objectives for pupil-pupil teaching. The necessity for innovation in the production of curriculum materials for this purpose was clearly demonstrated. New packaging formats,which enable children to assume the role of teacher by planning instruction for their peers, are vital to the implementation of the Mosston model and to the revision of the concept of the teacher as the sole purveyor of information. Each resource packet prepared for the sixth-grade children in the study to use during the Reciprocal phase contained a variety of worksheets for teaching the same language skill in different ways. While students functioned as teachers in selecting and preparing lessons for peers, the classroom teacher was responsible at this stage for diagnosis of skill needs and assigning of pupil partners for peer teaching.

The packaging of materials for student use in the transitional Reciprocal step presents interesting possibilities for extending the range of resources utilized in the classroom. For example, one packaging concept which might be effective for facilitating pupil-pupil teaching is a literature resource folio, presenting an array of activities related to a selection of children's trade books. Experiences with such a literature folio could extend children's reading interests and encourage creative reading, while promoting the skills of self-direction. The teacher's task in preparing a resource folio entails selecting the books to be used, developing a simplified "Teacher's Guide" describing a variety of activity ideas for extending the books, and gathering the materials which students using the folio will need to carry out the suggested activities. By using the guide and the accompanying resources in the folio, students are equipped to plan instruction for others. The format enables

students to complete a step toward self-direction by providing opportunities for decision-making and divergent thinking.

A study of American Folklore can be described to illustrate how a variation of the Mosston model might be implemented in the middle-school classroom. A series of learning episodes based on the American Folklore collections by Alvin Schwartz can be structured to incorporate a variety of teaching styles. The six collections[4] are valuable aids to students as they move toward independence in learning, because the approach used by Alvin Schwartz in compiling them provides an excellent model for them to follow in their own research. The sources from which he has gathered the folklore are carefully documented. The books are enjoyable and informative for older children to "read around" in, and they do not include "fakelore." Because the content is appealing to young children who do not yet have the reading skills to independently read the books (they are recommended for age 9 and older), they are appropriate resources for older students to use in planning folklore activities to share with younger children.

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[4] Alvin Schwartz. A Twister of Twists, A Tangler of Tongues. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1972.

Alvin Schwartz. Cross Your Fingers, Spit in Your Hat. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1974.

Alvin Schwartz. Kickle Snifters and Other Fearsome Critters. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1976.

Alvin Schwartz. Tomfoolery. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1973.

Alvin Schwartz. Whoppers. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1975.

Alvin Schwartz. Witcracks. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1973.

MODEL FOR PROMOTING SELF-DIRECTION WITH AMERICAN FOLKLORE (BOOKS BY ALVIN SCHWARTZ)

STYLE	OBJECTIVE(S)	INSTRUCTIONAL FORMAT	BOOKS BASIC TO ACTIVITIES	INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURES
1. COMMAND	Introduce the Alvin Schwartz approach to the study of American Folklore	Large Group	A TWISTER OF TWISTS, A TANGLER OF TONGUES (Tongue twisters)	TEACHER DIRECTS INSTRUCTION FOR CLASS: The Caedmon recording of George S. Irving reading all the tongue twisters is played. Follow-up discussion on how to collect folklore materials is led by teacher.
2. TASK	Create interest in folklore tricks with words and Offer students opportunities for choice-making	Learning Centers	TOMFOOLERY (Trickery and foolery with words) and WITCRACKS (Jokes and jests from American Folklore)	TEACHER PROVIDES ACTIVITY OPTIONS FOR STUDENTS IN LEARNING CENTERS: After reading selections from TOMFOOLERY and WITCRACKS to the class, teacher introduces WORD PLAY learning centers where students choose from a variety of word trick activity options (puns, tangletalk, tall talk, and riddles). BOOKMAKING ACTIVITIES.
3. RECIPROCAL	Create interest in folklore creatures, tall tales, and superstitions and Allow students to assume the role of teacher	Pupil-Pupil Teaching: Resource Folios	KICKLE SNIFTERS AND OTHER FEARSOME CRITTERS (American folklore creatures) and WHOPPERS (Tall tales and other lies) and CROSS YOUR FINGERS, SPIT IN YOUR HAT (Superstitions and other beliefs)	TEACHER PROVIDES IDEAS AND RESOURCES FOR PUPIL-PUPIL TEACHING: Simple "Teacher's Guides" and Resource Files are prepared to help students design learning activities for each other.

MODEL FOR PROMOTING SELF-DIRECTION WITH AMERICAN FOLKLORE (BOOKS BY ALVIN SCHWARTZ) continued...

STYLE	OBJECTIVE(S)	INSTRUCTIONAL FORMAT	BOOKS BASIC TO ACTIVITIES	INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURES
4. INDIVIDUAL PROGRAM: TEACHER-DESIGNED	Increase student interest in reading the Alvin Schwartz American Folklore books and Provide decision-making opportunities for students through individual project options	Individual Projects Planned with Teacher	Six American Folklore Books by Alvin Schwartz	TEACHER AND STUDENT PLAN TOGETHER. STUDENT SELECTS TOPIC FOR INDIVIDUAL STUDY AND DEVELOPS PROJECT PLAN: After student and teacher agree upon objectives for a project extending an idea in one of the Schwartz books, student designs project according to structure provided by teacher.
5. GUIDED DISCOVERY	Extend student interest to other American Folklore resources and Allow students to make all structural decisions on individual project	Individual Projects: Objectives Planned with Teacher	A Classroom Collection of American Folklore Resources	STUDENT DEFINES PROJECT, AFTER CONSULTATION WITH TEACHER ON OBJECTIVES: Student determines structure and subject matter; teacher supports with a variety of American Folklore resources.
6. INDIVIDUAL PROGRAM: STUDENT-DESIGNED	Promote student selection of resources and Allow students to make all decisions on individual project	Individual Projects: All Decisions Made by Students	Resources Located by Students	STUDENT DIRECTS LEARNING: All decisions are controlled by student, including planning of objectives, activities to meet them, self-evaluation procedures, and resources. Teacher consults and facilitates.

In addition to the six books by Alvin Schwartz, these resources are recommended for teachers utilizing the American Folklore model:

1. COMMAND STYLE

Hopkins, Lee Bennett. A Teacher's Guide. (A TWISTER OF TWISTS, A TANGLER OF TONGUES--TONGUE TWISTERS). J. B. Lippincott Co., 1975, pp. 4-7. Available from the publisher on request.

Schwartz, Alvin. A Twister of Twists, A Tangler of Tongues. An LP recording and cassette featuring George S. Irving reading the tongue twisters from the book. Caedmon Records, 505 Eighth Ave., New York, New York 10018.

2. TASK STYLE

Breyfogle, Nelson, Pitts, and Santich. Creating a Learning Environment. A Learning Center Handbook. Santa Monica, California: Goodyear Publishing Co., 1976.

Davidson, Fountain, Grogan, Short, and Steely. The Learning Center Book. Santa Monica, California: Goodyear Publishing Co., 1976.

Encyclopedia Britannica Educational Corporation. From Cover to Cover: Publishing in your Classroom. Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica Educational Corporation, 1970. Available from the publisher on request. (Ideas for bookmaking).

Hopkins, Lee Bennett. A Teacher's Guide. (TOMFOOLERY -- TRICKERY AND FOOLERY WITH WORDS and WITCRACKS -- JOKES AND JESTS FROM AMERICAN FOLKLORE). J. B. Lippincott Co., 1975, pp. 8-9 and 10-13.

3. RECIPROCAL STYLE

Noyce, Ruth M. A Teacher's Guide to American Folklore. (CROSS YOUR FINGERS, SPIT IN YOUR HAT -- SUPERSTITIONS AND OTHER BELIEFS; KICKLE SNIFTERS AND OTHER FEARSOME CRITTERS; and WHOPPERS -- TALL TALES AND OTHER LIES). Available from the author on request: 214 Bailey Hall, The University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas 66045.

4. INDIVIDUAL PROGRAM: TEACHER-DESIGNED

Kaplan, Sandra N. The Big Book of Independent Study. Santa Monica, California: Goodyear Publishing Co,. 1976, pp. 19-62. (Hands-on material to help students collect and organize information).

5. GUIDED DISCOVERY
6. INDIVIDUAL PROGRAM: STUDENT-DESIGNED

Blaney, Charles D. Folklore: Collecting Folklore, American Tradition and Books for Reading. ED 049 221 ERIC Document Reproduction Service. Washington, D.C.: Educational Resources Information Center, 1970. (How to collect folklore).

Coffin, Tristram P. and Cohen, Hennig. Folklore from the Working Folk of America. Garden City, New York: Anchor/Doubleday, 1974. (American folk literature, songs, verses, riddles, superstitions,practices, customs, rituals, and games).

_____. Folklore in America. Garden City, New York: Anchor/Doubleday, 1970. (Tales, songs, superstitions, proverbs, riddles, games, folk drama, and festivals from America).

Nebraska University. Folklore in the Elementary Schools. ED 045 679 ERIC Document Reproduction Service. Washington D.C.: Educational Resources Information Center, 1968. (Topics for research of children, guides for collecting, and books to read).

Thomas, Robert B. The Old Farmer's Almanac. Dublin, N.H.: Yankee, Inc., 1974. (Pleasantries and anecdotes from the past).

Weitzman, David. My Backyard History Book. Boston, Massachusetts: Little, Brown and Co., Inc., 1975. (Family, neighborhood, and community lore).

Wigginton, Eliot. The Foxfire Book. New York: Anchor/Doubleday, 1972. (Snake lore, weather signs, home remedies, and hunting tales. Three later volumes are also in print).

Wood, Pamela. You and Aunt Arie. Washington, D.C.: Institutional Development and Economic Affairs Service, Inc., 1975. (A guide to cultural journalism based on Foxfire and its descendants).

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